

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-10-14—TWO WITNESSES

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

It may not often cross our minds, but the Law of God is not just required of human beings. Even the heavenly angels obey it to the letter. We can see one example in the dispute between Michael the archangel and Satan:

JUDE 1:8-9 Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, **despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.** 9 Yet **Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil** he disputed about the body of Moses, **durst [dared] not bring against him a railing [evil speaking] accusation,** but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

Why would Michael withhold accusing Satan of evil? Because the Law of God forbids it:

EXODUS 22:28 **Thou shalt not revile the gods [human rulers or judges], nor curse the ruler of thy people.**

But the Law of God is even kept by the Lawgivers: God the Father and Jesus Christ. Remember the prophecy that foretold that Jesus Christ would remain silent during His trial?

ISAIAH 53:7 He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, **yet He opened not His mouth:** He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, **and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb [silent], so He openeth not His mouth.**

But then that is not exactly what happened, was it? During the trial, Jesus actually spoke up before the high priest:

MATTHEW 26:60-65 But *they* did not find *any* [witnesses against Jesus]. Although many false witnesses came forward, they did not find *any evidence.* 61 Then at *the last*, two false witnesses came forward *and* said, “This *man* said, ‘I have the power to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” 62 And **the high priest** rose up *and* **said to Him, “Have You no answer for what these are testifying against You?”** 63 **But Jesus was silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I adjure You by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.”** 64 **Jesus said to him, “You have said *it*.** Moreover, I say to you, in the future you shall see the Son of man sitting at *the* right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” 65 Then the high priest ripped his *own* garments, saying, “He has blasphemed! Why do we need any more witnesses? Behold, **you [the Sanhedrin] have just now heard His blasphemy.**

Was prophecy wrong? No, but to understand why Jesus spoke up requires knowing a particular statute of the Law of God:

LEVITICUS 5:1 If **a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter—if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.**

While a little confusing, this statute states that it is a sin to withhold or refuse to provide testimony when under oath as a witness. When the high priest spoke to Jesus and said, “I ADJURE you by the living God” he was putting Jesus Christ under oath to testify whether or not He was the “Christ, the Son of God.” Per the statute in Leviticus 5:1, Jesus Christ had to respond; otherwise, He would have become guilty of sin. So, the Law of God applies even in heaven as well as on earth. God upholds it everywhere because He is the Lawgiver and the Great King¹.

One very important statute applies in all criminal trials because it requires multiple witnesses to testify to the truth of events:

DEUTERONOMY 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: **at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.**

Perhaps most important of all is that it applies to death penalty cases:

DEUTERONOMY 17:6 **At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death;** *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.

Obviously, this is why the high priest was so desperate to find TWO or more witnesses to testify against Jesus even if they were FALSE witnesses. Without two witnesses, the Sanhedrin council could not convict Him. But after the two false witnesses and Jesus admitting He was the Son of God, the high priest called for the Sanhedrin to vote for convicting Him:

MATTHEW 26:65-66 Then **the high priest** rent his clothes, saying, **He [Jesus Christ] hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye [the Sanhedrin council] have heard His blasphemy. 66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.**

Witnesses are so important that they are even a part of modern judicial systems. This is why every witness is required to take an oath to tell the truth. While I am certain that many are false witnesses, they are only heaping punishment upon their heads because they do not understand that every oath is witnessed and judged by GOD.

Witnesses are so important that they are also required in the Day of Judgment when each and every person is brought before Jesus Christ:

MATTHEW 12:36-37 But I [Jesus] say unto you, That **every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.** 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

¹ Matt. 5:35.

Do not be confused by “idle word.” It is not limiting judgment to only some of our words. Jesus is saying that we are judged for everything we say, INCLUDING idle or meaningless chatter.

But who are the witnesses in OUR Day of Judgment? The parable of the talents in Matthew 12 has a corollary in Luke 19. His account includes a very important detail when the nobleman returned to take account of his servants:

LUKE 19:20-22 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is thy pound*, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. 22 And he saith unto him, **Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.** Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

Unlike the modern judicial systems that allow people to plead the fifth amendment against self-incrimination, the Law of God REQUIRES testimony of the accused. We saw that in the trial of Jesus Christ. Therefore, each person is a WITNESS who is required to testify of their words and actions in the Day of Judgment. In that day, God will make it impossible to give false testimony. But that is only one witness and the Law requires two or more. Who is the second witness?

REVELATION 3:14 And unto the angel of the *ekklesia* of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and **True Witness [Jesus Christ]**, the beginning of the creation of God;

As you probably guessed, Jesus Christ is the faithful TRUE Witness when everyone comes before God in their Day of Judgment.

So, all of this brings me to a question. Why will there be the Two Witnesses during the Tribulation and Day of the Lord mentioned in Revelation?

REVELATION 11:3-4, 7 And I [*Jesus Christ*] will give *power* unto My **two witnesses**, and **they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days**, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. ... 7 And **when they shall have finished their testimony**, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

The key is in verse 7, which says, “when they shall have finished their TESTIMONY.” Who are they testifying against and why? Revelation 11:14 confirms that the testimony of the Two Witnesses is the last thing that occurs in the Sixth Trumpet, also called the Second Woe. What happens next is the Seventh Trumpet, which is the Day of the Lord God’s vengeance upon the Beast, False Prophet, and all those with the mark of the Beast:

REVELATION 14:7, 9-11 [*An angel*] Saying with a loud voice, Fear **God**, and give glory to Him; for **the hour of His judgment is come**: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. ... 9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,**

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and **he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And **the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever [eternal death]**: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

REVELATION 19:20-21 And the **beast was taken, and with him the false prophet** that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. **These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.** 21 And **the remnant [rest of those who received the mark] were slain** with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

The Two Witnesses testify against the Beast, False Prophet, and all those with the mark of the Beast. BY THEIR TESTIMONY Jesus Christ sentences them to eternal death in the Lake of Fire. This is why the Two Witnesses are on the scene well before the Day of the LORD and continue through the Sixth Trumpet (1,260 days total). The Seventh Trumpet is the vengeance and judgment of death upon the wicked of this world. Without the Two Witnesses, they could not be sentenced to death as required by the Law of God.

Thankfully, the Day of Judgment for the firstfruit saints is now. For those who are asleep in the grave, their judgment is finished. But even those who are alive at the end of the Sixth Trumpet, their judgment will be completed at the beginning of the Seventh Trumpet when it sounds. In other words, the judgment of the firstfruit saints occurs at the resurrection BEFORE the vengeance and judgment of death comes upon the wicked. This fulfills a promise of God that the saints will WITNESS God's vengeance against those who persecuted them:

PSALM 58:10-11 **The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance:** he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. 11 So that a man shall say, **Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth.**

God our Father and Jesus truly are our salvation. We can take great comfort that the fullness of God's desire is to bring His children into the Kingdom² and wipe away the tears³ of afflictions and persecutions we receive at the hands of the wicked.

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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² John 3:16.

³ Rev. 21:4.